

## i've got your back by darlingargents

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**Summary:**

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## i've got your back

### Author's Note:

Prompt: [Author's Choice](#), any siblings, I've got your back

I meant for this to be super short and then it became... still short but a lot longer than I thought it would be. Oh well.

Okay, so Mike's never been this nervous in his entire life, but it's fine. It's fine.

He's written out notecards with exactly what he wants to say. He's gone through probably fifty drafts. It all boils down to the same thing. *I like boys too. Please don't hate me.*

Nancy's going to be home from work in ten minutes, and Mike is pacing across his bedroom, back and forth and back and forth. Swear to god, he's going to wear down the floorboards to nothing.

This isn't going to be the first time he's told someone.

He told his friends, a couple weeks ago. Will and El and Lucas and Dustin and Max, all at once. He hadn't written out notecards — he'd hoped that he could just say it, just in a couple of words, and thought maybe notecards would look weird. He'd stammered it out, trembling like a leaf, and as soon as the words had left his mouth, he'd started crying like a baby. It had been pathetic and embarrassing and if it had been about literally anything else he would've been teased for years about it — but it wasn't, and none of his friends are that cruel, he'd discovered. Will had rushed to hug him immediately, and El had followed quickly, and then the rest. Everything had been a blur of his tears and the ringing in his ears and the lightness in his chest from finally saying it and the heaviness of knowing there's no taking it back, it's real it's real it's *real*. He can't remember, now, what the others had said — just the tone of warmth, of support, of love.

When he'd finally finished crying and freaking out, he'd been able to

hear some of what the others were saying. Mostly, he'd focused in enough to hear Will saying that he liked boys, too. And not girls at all.

That had become a bit of a blur, too. The group hug target had moved from him to Will, and he'd joined in, more than a little grateful that the focus wasn't on him anymore — and relieved beyond words that he wasn't alone in their group.

Not alone. He'd thought about that, late at night sometimes when he couldn't sleep. Rolled the words on his tongue. Smiled until his cheeks hurt. *Not alone.*

The group had taken it well, for both him and Will. They all still acted the same around each other, except now Mike was more willing to mention hot actors in movies as well as actresses, and sometimes Will would chime in with an agreement, and no one gave them weird looks. It feels nice, to not have to hide.

It is nice. And now Mike wants to tell someone else. He wants to tell Nancy.

He's not ready to tell his parents. Maybe he won't ever be — or maybe just not for a while. But Nancy seems like a fairly safe bet — or, well, had *seemed* fairly safe when he'd decided and before he'd started drafting his notecards and imagining all the possible reactions she might have.

*I like boys too. Please don't hate me.*

That was all.

Downstairs, Mike hears the front door open and shut again, and his heart rate kicks into overdrive. He can feel himself *sweating*, what the fuck. He doesn't think it's healthy to put yourself under such a level of stress that you feel like you're having a heart attack.

*Maybe you shouldn't do it*, a helpful little voice in the back of his mind tells him, and for a moment he wants to listen. To tuck the notecards away and do it some other time.

But... no. Mike forces the thought away. It's now or never. He tucks

the cards into his pocket and leaves his room, taking the stairs two at a time and meeting Nancy in the kitchen, where she's pulling off her coat. He can hear Holly's cartoons playing in the next room, and he reminds himself that she's not going to overhear. Not that he would care if she knows, really — he thinks that she'd probably care even less than Nancy — but he doesn't really trust that she won't tell someone because she doesn't understand why it has to be a secret.

Better to be just the two of them.

"Hey," Nancy says, draping her damp coat over a chair. It's pouring outside, loudly enough that Mike can hear it from inside. "Mom and dad home?"

He shakes his head. "Date night. It's just us kids."

She grins. "Gotta order pizza and have a movie marathon, right?"

"Yeah. Uh, can I talk to you?"

Nancy had been reaching into the fridge for something, and she pauses, holding the fridge open, to look over her shoulder at him. "Um, okay. Is something wrong?"

"Nothing's wrong. I just... wanted to tell you something?" Fuck, he didn't mean to make it a question. And his heart rate is going up again. His palms are sweating. Fuck, fuck, fuck. *This is a terrible idea this is a terrible idea this is a terrible idea*—

"Sure, okay." She grabs a carton of orange juice from the fridge and pulls a glass out of the cupboard, not looking at him as she pours out her juice.

Not having to see her face makes it a little easier. Mike pulls out his notecards. Her brows raise when she sees them, in surprise or maybe confusion, but she doesn't say anything, just sits down at the table with her glass and gestures for Mike to join her. He shakes his head. He needs to pace for this.

He looks down at the first notecard. His hands are shaking a little. "I want you to know that what I'm going to tell you is a part of me. It doesn't change who I am at all." His voice sounds flat and

emotionless to his own ears, but that's okay. He switches out the card.

"I've always been like this, and nothing made me like this. I'm okay." Card switch. "I'm still the same Mike that you know, the one that's annoyed the hell out of you since we were kids." Card switch, and he chances a glance at her. Her face is unreadable, but she doesn't look upset, or like she's about to throw her glass at him and stomp off. His stomach is doing something incredibly twisty and uncomfortable. It feels like he maybe swallowed a bunch of snakes. He looks back down at the cards.

"What I want you to know is—" and he can't finish reading. His throat is closing up. He looks at Nancy again, and her expression is still neutral and entirely unreadable and he thinks he needs to know how she'll react, needs a do-over button in case it goes bad, but he can't — he has to say it to know, and he can't go back when he does. She'll never see him the same way. Everything will be different.

He has to say it. He can't say it.

Mike drops the cards and covers his face with his hands, fighting back the sudden tears pressing against his eyes, and god fucking damn it, this was not supposed to happen. The cards were supposed to help, they were supposed to make it easier—

"Hey, hey, breathe, okay?"

Nancy's got her arms wrapped around him and Mike lets out an embarrassing choked-off sob and leans into her warmth, trying and failing to ignore the part of his brain telling him that she'd shove him as far away as she could if she knew what he'd almost told her.

Why did he even bother? Why would he even try—

"Mike, it's okay. You're okay." She's much shorter than him now — he'd shot up like a weed in the last couple of years — but she still pulls his head into her chest and rests her hand in his hair, like he's still twelve and can fit against her like that. Like they're both children again, and fuck, there's another sob. His nose is running and his face is probably red and blotchy and his eyes are itching from

how much they're watering and Mike is a goddamn mess.

After he's been crying for probably an embarrassingly long time, Nancy pulls away and holds his face in her hands, meeting his eyes and not allowing him to look away. "You can tell me. Whatever you needed to say. You can tell me. I promise, it's okay."

Her words almost send him back into tears, but he takes a deep breath and fights it back. All the fight has drained out of him. The anxious words are still ramming at his brain, but muted, just a little; the tears have numbed him. Just a bit. Maybe just enough.

He takes a deep breath. "I like boys, too. Boys and girls. I'm — I'm bisexual."

Nancy doesn't blink. Her expression, concerned and careful and open, stays exactly the same for a long moment, and Mike feels like he might throw up, and why isn't she *moving*—

"Okay," she says. "Thank you for telling me."

And he starts crying again, and this time, it doesn't hurt so much.

She holds him, sits down with him at the kitchen table, and when he stops clinging to her like a baby, she makes him a cup of tea and forces him to drink it. He's still crying a little, then, but it doesn't hurt at all now. He's smiling, too; he can't stop smiling.

"I'm sorry you were so scared," she says quietly, after he's finished the tea. The storm outside is picking up speed a little, but Mike isn't worried about it. He's safe, he's inside with Nancy. "But it's fine. I promise it's fine. I've got your back, okay?"

Mike doesn't know if he can completely believe her, but for the moment, he lets himself pretend.